



Equity:

listening to the truth, amplifying voices, changing systems.



2

CONTENTS

3

A LETTER FROM
OUR EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR

4

INTRODUCTION

6

HISTORY OF THE
COMMUNITY-WIDE
VIOLENCE PLAN

12

THE WHY: BLACK/
AFRICAN AMERICAN
WOMEN & LGBTQ+

14

SIMPLEX

18

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
& WOMEN OF COLOR

21

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
& LGBTQ+

22

EVENTS CALENDAR

25

PARTICIPATING
ORGANIZATIONS
& REFERENCES

*A Letter from our **Executive Director***

Dear Network:

The Domestic Violence Network is so pleased to launch our fifth community wide plan. We have worked tirelessly putting this plan together- meeting with community members, social service providers, survivors, law enforcement and others to develop the plan.

The two topics that we have chosen to focus on, Black and African American women and the LGBTQ+ community, are two populations that have historically been left out of the conversation of domestic violence prevention and intervention.

Over the next three years, DVN will be hosting many events discussing barriers that women of color and the LGBTQ+ populations experience. We will be having conversations about the systems that continue to hold these populations in oppression- and how to dismantle these systems with the goal to create a more equitable Indianapolis.

We've been asked why we are acting on addressing these groups and the systems that have furthered their oppression when we are a domestic violence agency. As discussed in this plan, oppression is one of the root causes of violence, and our current systems were originally designed to primarily benefit

white, heterosexual, cisgender individuals, and to address oppression we have to confront and start to change these systems to benefit all individuals in the community. DVN is committed to preventing domestic violence, and we cannot effectively work on prevention if we are not addressing all forms of violence and, therefore, oppression. We learned through our previous community wide plan that domestic violence is an intersectional issue, and through this plan we hope to shed light on how race, sexual orientation, and cisgender/transgender status are incredibly important intersections when discussing domestic violence.

At DVN, we understand that many of the barriers that will be discussed will evoke strong emotions in the community. If you are a white, heterosexual, cisgender individual, this plan may very well make you feel uncomfortable. Our hope is that you sit in that discomfort and do some self-reflection, because there is growth on the other side of that discomfort.

We welcome you to join us as we educate, learn, grow, and advocate for a strong, equitable society built for all people.

All the best-

Kelly McBride





FOR TWO DECADES, THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE NETWORK HAS WORKED WITH DEDICATED PARTNERS TO PUT AN END TO VIOLENCE IN DOMESTIC LIFE.

*We work with the public to gather data, engage with organizations to deliver better services and collaborate with partners to advocate and educate for a **healthier community.***

Introduction

For two decades, the Domestic Violence Network has worked with dedicated partners to put an end to violence in domestic life. By tapping into the expertise in our social service, government, law enforcement and health care sectors and conversations in the wider community, diverse efforts have focused on creating cultural change to eradicate violence in the home – and in daily life.

About every three years, DVN spearheads a community-wide plan to assess progress and challenges to achieving violence-free homes. We work with the public to gather data, engage with organizations to deliver better services and collaborate with partners to advocate and educate for a healthier community. The plan will focus on two long-neglected yet vulnerable populations: Black and African American women and members of the LGBTQ+ communities.





History of the Community-Wide Plan

In 2000, Mayor Bart Peterson challenged the community to provide an accountable, comprehensive and culturally sensitive approach to preventing family violence. The Domestic Violence Network (DVN) facilitated the creation and implementation of the Family Violence Community Wide Plan which continued for several years. After reviewing the successes and growth areas of the

Family Violence Community-Wide Plan, with the support of a steering committee which included Indianapolis Mayor Gregory Ballard, Congressman Dan Burton, and Congressman André Carson, DVN launched a new initiative in 2009. *Peace in Our Homes: A Call to End Domestic Abuse in Central Indiana* was a three-year initiative building on the foundation of its predecessor but focused on the

needs articulated by the advocates group, the steering committee and community participants.

The third iteration of the community-wide plan began with a strong campaign to involve the entire community in violence prevention. By commissioning an environmental scan to assess community needs and the capacity to address domestic violence in Central

Indiana, Community-Wide Plan 3.0 (CWP 3.0) was born. Building on the foundation laid by the previous Community Wide Plans, CWP 3.0 sought to end domestic violence through bold strategies focused on four target populations: the community, victims/ survivors, people who batter and abuse, and youth. Over three years, CWP 3.0 brought together service providers, law enforcement and the community to improve the response to and prevention of domestic violence in Central Indiana. Partnerships among these stakeholders strengthened as they worked toward the common goal of ending domestic violence.

In 2017, the fourth community-wide plan took a different approach: To truly end domestic violence, the community needs to take a look at the root causes of violence. Through education, community forums, panel discussions and film screenings, DVN led an inquiry into the risks and protective factors for violence and examined family violence's intersection with other social issues such as economics, family life, education, mental health, substance abuse and suicide. Through the *Intersections: Engage, Collaborate, Transform* plan, DVN was able to link community members with social service providers so they could learn from one another, create common goals and objectives, pool resources and collaborate on creating a healthier community.



*Black and African American women and the LGBTQ+ community experience **higher rates** of interpersonal violence.*

In creating this latest plan, DVN first consulted the party who not only made our work possible but who also is helping us make the changes necessary for improvement: our community. Our first step was sending out a community-wide survey with a list of popular topics for conversations and noteworthy local and national current events. After the survey, DVN conducted a series of focus groups with our community partners, community members, law enforcement, the City of Indianapolis and grassroots organizations – all of whom work both directly and indirectly to fight domestic violence. During these sessions, discussions began on the results of the survey and then transitioned into deeper conversations about the root causes of violence, domestic violence and trauma, and their impact on populations who have



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historically been underserved and misunderstood by the domestic violence and other social justice movements.

The surveys and listening sessions led DVN to two such populations: Black/ African American women and the LGBTQ+ community. DVN uses the terms Black and African American to ensure all members of the African Diaspora are adequately and appropriately represented. While both communities have been placed under the umbrella of domestic violence prevention, there has been no critical look at the different barriers, gaps in services and unique issues that Black and African American women and the LGBTQ+ community face every day. This plan aims to change all that.

*DVN's goal is for this plan to be community driven and for others to step back to create space for Black and African American women and LGBTQ+ people to **have their voices heard, elevated and amplified** in community discussions.*

▼

*The overarching goal of **Equity** is to facilitate collaboration between all sectors of social services and to establish best practices in serving these special populations.*

This plan is designed to elevate and amplify the voices of those who have systemically been left behind. DVN will offer opportunities to initiate difficult conversations and find the best solutions for survivors of domestic violence, including and especially Black/African American women and members of the LGBTQ+ community. Members of the Black/African American women and the LGBTQ+ community experience violence at higher rates than any other group in this country. We want to get to the root cause of this unfortunate reality.

The overarching goal of **Equity** is to facilitate collaboration between all sectors of social services and to establish best practices in serving these special populations.

DVN's goal is for this plan to be community driven and for others to step back to create space for Black and African American women and LGBTQ+ people to have their voices heard, elevated and amplified in community discussions. In the coming years, the Domestic Violence Network will continue to bring together experts who will identify risks and protective factors for violence in Central Indiana and to rally community commitments to work toward our common goal of creating violence-free homes. At the conclusion of these community conversations, task forces will emerge to develop specific goals and objectives to address these issues, with a keen focus on these special populations.



1994

PASSAGE OF THE VIOLENCE
AGAINST WOMEN ACT (VAWA)

2007

TARANA BURKE FOUNDED
THE 'ME TOO' MOVEMENT

The Why: Black/ African American Women & LGBTQ+

Domestic violence is an all-too-common issue affecting 1 in 4 women and 1 in 7 men (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2019). The domestic violence movement was founded on awareness and intervention and has made great strides since the 1970s. It's hard to imagine that a little over 40 years ago, there were no laws in place to protect women who were abused by their intimate partners. The passage of the Violence Against Women Act in 1994 further added protections to women and educated the public on the effects of domestic violence on families.

From the inception of the domestic violence movement to present day, much of the research around domestic violence has focused on White women. This is alarming, because Black and African American women experience domestic violence at a rate 2.5 times that of White women.

When the "Me Too" movement gained momentum in October 2017, it was rarely attributed to Tarana Burke, who founded the movement 10 years earlier. Alyssa Milano, a White actress, encouraged Harvey Weinstein survivors to tweet their experiences using the #MeToo

hashtag. Burke, a woman of color, was mostly left out of the conversation as White women took it over. Instances like this are far too common and erase the contributions Black women provide to our society.

Black Lives Matter gained recognition in response to the disproportional killing of Black men by law enforcement. Black women – in particular, Black transgender women – were left out of this general conversation. Even today, if a Black man is shot and killed by police, it gains much more media attention than if a transgender Black woman is killed by violence. We do not condone violence or murder of anyone; however, we must point out that critical conversations concerning violence against oppressed communities continue to leave out the crimes committed against Black women and Black transgender women.

In addition to Black and African American women, individuals who identify as being part of the LGBTQ+ community are also continually and systemically left out of community conversations. A 2015 survey conducted by the National Resource Center on



2013

LGBTQ+ PROTECTIONS WERE
INCLUDED UNDER VAWA

2015

MARRIAGE EQUALITY PASSED



2017

'ME TOO' MOVEMENT
GAINED MOMENTUM

Domestic Violence found 54% of respondents who identified as being transgender experienced some form of intimate partner violence, including acts involving coercive control and physical harm. Additionally, 47% of respondents were sexually assaulted at some point in their lifetime and 10% were sexually assaulted in the previous year.

Furthermore, the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence found while individuals in the LGBTQ+ community experience high rates of violence, LGBTQ+ survivors also face significant barriers to finding personal safety and accessing services. Historically and currently, these barriers include incarceration and harassment by police, unintended outing, discrimination by service providers and a lack of culturally responsive services that often result in re-victimization. Additional layers of oppression compound the trauma associated with a violent and toxic relationship.

Because of the lack of LGBTQ-inclusive violence prevention efforts and healthy relationship programming in most communities, LGBTQ individuals

remain unaware of the prevalence and impact of domestic and sexual violence in their population. A significant finding and common theme of this research is that even though Black and African American women and the LGBTQ+ community experience higher rates of interpersonal violence, these groups report experiencing less comfort reaching out to police, medical professionals and shelters for help. As we continue to combat domestic violence, racism and hate, we must look at how all three interact.

As we examine all the forces interfacing domestic violence in these special populations, we must keep in mind that each is composed of a powerful subgroup of young people. Youth are our future, and their powerful voices and perspectives must be elevated. DVN's robust youth program will play a significant role in widening the scope of this plan to include youth voices. With student-driven campaigns and the Youth Network, DVN will reach a demographic who can propel us forward in ending domestic violence and changing the culture leading to violence.



Simplex

A community-wide plan cannot be formed without the voices it's intended to serve. As such, DVN hosted two separate community conversations, one with individuals who identified as being a part of the LGBTQ+ community and another with a group of women who identified as being Black and African American. The community conversations were facilitated by Ivy Tech Community College through the Simplex format. Simplex is a problem-solving tool used in group listening sessions and facilitation. The goal is for the group to collaborate on a creative solution that is informed by content experts and key stakeholders. With the involvement and support of Ivy Tech Community College and its strategic initiatives, equity, diversity

and belonging teams, DVN was granted the opportunity to create this safe space for conversation. During each full-day Simplex session, the groups worked to solve one overarching problem.

For the LGBTQ+-focused session, the problem was: *"How might we address the issue of domestic violence that directly impacts the LGBTQ+ community?"* During the session, members of this community addressed issues and barriers they have faced personally and recounted the often problematic experiences faced by colleagues, clients, friends and family. Specific problems included service providers purposely mis-gendering (using incorrect pronouns) clients, referring to clients using their

"dead name" (the name given at birth but no longer used by the individual), and using an overall tone of disrespect. Participants in the conversation also expressed concern about the lack of referrals available for LGBTQ+ individuals in need of services – such as therapy providers, housing assistance and emergency shelters – and no cohesive system of care coordination for LGBTQ+ violence survivors. After examining the problem, negative experiences associated with the problem and various points of contention, participants expressed their ideal solutions to making positive change. DVN took these resolutions and made them into actionable items that will be carried out through the duration of this plan.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IS AN ALL-TOO-COMMON ISSUE AFFECTING 1 IN 4 WOMEN AND 1 IN 7 MEN (CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION, 2019).

*Why is the onus of **decreasing and eradicating violence** in the community always on the members of the Black community?*

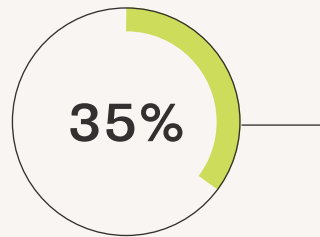
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"How might we address the issue of domestic violence that directly impacts the LGBTQ+ community?"

"How might DVN change the culture that leads to domestic violence by engaging the Black and African American community?"

The second community conversation hosted by DVN focused on Black and African American women. The specific problem to be solved in this session was, *"How might DVN change the culture that leads to domestic violence by engaging the Black and African American community?"* After hearing the question, a participant shared a common frustration voiced in her community: Why is the onus of decreasing and eradicating violence in the community always on the members of the Black community? The sentiment was echoed by another participant, who said the Black populace is often expected to take full responsibility for violence within the community. Participants went on to discuss how systemic racism results in violence of all types, including domestic violence, and that we must look at the greater, systemic picture to have a robust conversation on solutions. As the conversation continued throughout the day, each participant spoke to the effects of trauma on the Black community and how it is not discussed, but should be, as it relates to Black and African American men and women. The theme of trauma and its effect on domestic violence was woven into the discussion that day as well as trauma's disproportional impact on the Black community.

*“I didn’t know there was such a thing as domestic violence growing up. I was told to just pray about it. **‘Black women don’t get hit,’** is what I was told. I didn’t know it could happen to me, no one told me that Black women could get abused. We’re supposed to be **strong, resilient,** all of that, like we’re supposed to just take the abuse and accept it. I didn’t know that there were other women like me, because **no one talks about it.**”*

-A Black female survivor



BLACK AND AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN EXPERIENCE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AT A RATE 35% HIGHER (OR 2.5 TIMES) THAN WHITE WOMEN.

Domestic Violence & Women of Color

Black and African American women experience domestic violence at a rate 2.5 times the rate of White women, who were the initial focus of the domestic violence movement. While these women of color experience higher rates of violence, they are the least likely to seek out and utilize services for victims of domestic violence. Why?

There is historical context to this: When African women were first brought to this country in chains, they were considered subhuman, animals, property. They were used, abused, raped and forced to exist in a world where they did not matter. Their dehumanization followed them throughout history,

even to our present day. In 2017, Georgetown Law Center found a common attitude among Black females: "Adults view Black girls as less innocent and more adult-like than their White peers."

Black girls are perceived to be more independent, more knowledgeable about sex and less in need of protection. Similarly, Black women are seldom seen as victims but as deserving of harm or unable to be harmed (Finoh and Sankofa, 2019). A 2015 survey of Black transgender and non-binary individuals found 53% have experienced sexual violence and 56% have experienced domestic violence. Due to the long legacy of Black women

being dehumanized, they often experience violence and believe they have no legal recourse to counteract it.

DVN hosted a listening session with a collective group of Black and African American women to find a solution to the question, "How can DVN change the culture that leads to domestic violence by engaging the Black and African American community?" The proposed solution to this complex challenge is to increase/create awareness and responsiveness of the connection between domestic violence, child abuse and trauma in the African American community.



DVN will lead the community to create:

- 1 A task force of women with a specific focus on the Black and African American community and the needs of victims and survivors of domestic violence in that community. The task force will use research into best practices to inform its work and will develop a project plan to ensure better representation in Central Indiana and specific events for the Black community.
- 2 Educational and training brochures geared toward assisting the Black and African American community specifically.
- 3 An event to host Ujima, the National Center on Violence Against Women in the African American Community, for educational sessions on best practices for serving women in the Black community.
- 4 Expanded programming to include specific issues related to the Black and African American community on healthy relationships. This programming will be available for all ages ranging from high school, middle school, elementary school, home school and for use within the juvenile detention system.
- 5 Educational outreach to service providers in Central Indiana on trauma-informed care and incorporation of best practices in provider care and in their organization's culture.

Domestic Violence & LGBTQ+

“I knew that he was going to kill me. I had nowhere to go and no one to help me. Nobody helps people like me. I was told it’s my fault because it’s my choice to live my life like this. I just wanted help so I wouldn’t die, but no one cared. I was invisible because I’m not some regular straight person.

Being gay shouldn’t be my death sentence.

My boyfriend tried to kill me and no one cared!”

-A survivor that identifies as LGBTQ+

The majority of the domestic violence awareness movement has focused on heterosexual relationships. As a result, members of the LGBTQ+ community have been largely left out of the movement. Recent research shows LGBTQ+ members fall victim to domestic violence at equal or even higher rates than their heterosexual counterparts (National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, 2019).

Domestic violence is not limited to heterosexual relationships, and resources should be available to more than them. In an effort to address barriers experienced by the LGBTQ+ community, DVN convened a meeting of individuals who identified as being part of the LGBTQ+ or Queer and Transgender community in Central Indiana to engage in a critical conversation around domestic violence, its impact in the LGBTQ+ community and the solution to the question, “How might DVN and this collective group of individuals develop a well-coordinated and well-constructed network for the Indianapolis LGBTQ+ community?”

In this session, participants shared their distrust of resources that, on their face, were beneficial but in reality served as barriers. Several participants echoed the sentiment and shared personal stories of the obstacles faced while trying to receive needed assistance while exiting violent relationships. They explained they rarely found inclusive and LGBTQ+-affirmative resources equipped to meet their unique needs. They agreed there needs to be a societal shift from thinking domestic violence cannot occur

in LGBTQ+ relationships. There also needs to be adequate and relevant training for service providers, across systems, on how best to provide services for LGBTQ+ individuals and violence survivors.

After a day of honest conversation, collaboration and strategic planning, the group set about answering the question. Their solution to this complex question is to create a meeting model for sharing, collaborative problem solving, coordination and accountability.

To that end, DVN will lead the community to:

- 1 Convene a task force to specifically focus on the specific needs of victims and survivors of domestic violence within the LGBTQ+ community. The task force will inform their work through research into best practices and will develop a project plan to ensure better representation of grassroots nonprofits serving people of color and the LGBTQ+ community in Indianapolis.
- 2 Collaborate with Queering Indy to develop a “Rainbow Book” for the Central Indiana community while elevating the voices of the LGBTQ+ members by ensuring space for their stories.
- 3 Host a special community event in the form of a film screening of “Blindsided” and a panel discussion, which will be open to any and all community members.

Events Calendar

DVN is determined to provide as many resources as possible to our Central Indiana community with the assistance of national speakers and nationally recognized organizations and through lectures, film screenings, panel discussions, social media, book clubs and community conversations. Events will continue to be scheduled throughout the duration of this plan. A calendar is available and will be updated with all DVN's Community-Wide Plan events.

For any questions about events, training and education opportunities, please contact Cecily Johnson, Director of Strategic Initiatives, at cjohnson@dnconnect.org.

EDUCATION & TRAINING EVENTS

COMMUNITY WIDE PLAN LAUNCH

UJIMA: A CONVERSATION ON BLACK WOMEN AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

COLORBLINDNESS WORKSHOP

"BLINDSIDED" FILM SCREENING AND PANEL IN PARTNERSHIP WITH NASW SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER

IDENTITY COMMITTEE AND INDYPRIDE

LABOR OF LOVE MATERNAL HEALTH CONFERENCE

INCLUSION WRAP UP OF YEAR 1

BOOK CLUB

"THE SISTERS ARE ALRIGHT" BOOK CLUB

"THE SISTERS ARE ALRIGHT" BOOK CLUB COFFEE AND CONVERSATION

"TOMORROW WILL BE DIFFERENT" BOOK CLUB

"TOMORROW WILL BE DIFFERENT" BOOK CLUB COFFEE AND CONVERSATION

the month of
FEBRUARY

NATIONAL BLACK HISTORY MONTH

the month of
MARCH

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH
INTERNATIONAL TRANSGENDER DAY OF VISIBILITY

the month of
APRIL

SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH
BLACK MATERNAL HEALTH WEEK
NATIONAL MINORITY HEALTH MONTH
LESBIAN VISIBILITY DAY



the month of
SEPTEMBER

BISEXUALITY DAY
BISEXUAL AWARENESS WEEK

the month of
JUNE

NATIONAL PRIDE MONTH
JUNETEENTH
STONEWALL RIOTS ANNIVERSARY

the month of
OCTOBER

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH
LGBTQ HISTORY MONTH
NATIONAL COMING OUT DAY
INTERSEX AWARENESS DAY
ASEXUAL AWARENESS WEEK

the month of
NOVEMBER

INTERNATIONAL TRANSGENDER DAY OF REMEMBRANCE





Participating Organizations

ASPIRE

BEACON OF HOPE CRISIS CENTER

CENTER FOR VICTIM AND HUMAN RIGHTS

CENTRAL INDIANA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

CHILD ADVOCATES

CHILDREN'S BUREAU

COBURN PLACE AND SAFE HAVEN

EXODUS REFUGEE

FAMILIES FIRST

FRANCISCAN HEALTH INDIANAPOLIS - CENTER OF HOPE

INDIANA STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

INDIANA YOUTH GROUP

INDIANAPOLIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

INDYPRIDE

IUPUI LGBTQ+ CENTER

IVY TECH COMMUNITY COLLEGE - INDIANAPOLIS

LA PLAZA

LEGACY HOUSE

LIFESMART YOUTH

MARION COUNTY COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS

MARION COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

MARION COUNTY PUBLIC DEFENDER

NASW SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY COMMITTEE

QUEERING INDY

SALVATION ARMY

SILENT NO MORE

STARS FOR CHILDREN

CITY OF INDIANAPOLIS - OFFICE OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY

THE DAMIEN CENTER

THE JULIAN CENTER

THE KWEEN PROJECT

THE NEVER ALONE PROJECT

TRINITY HAVEN

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COMMUNITY-WIDE PLAN 2020